



October 2, 2009

Washington State Building Code Council
128 10th Ave SW
P.O. Box 42525
Olympia, Washington 98504-2525

Dear State Building Code Council Members,

Following a directive from the State Legislature, the Building Code Council has proposed amendments to Section 907 of the Fire and International Building Codes and Section R315 in the Residential Code to require carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in dwellings. In addition to my testimony at the September 29th State Building Code Council public hearing in Renton (copy enclosed), I would like to speak to the date of implementation of the proposed rule changes.

It is a great step in the right direction to require CO alarms in dwellings; however, the proposed code does not require them in most dwellings until 2013. Several states have implemented a CO alarm requirement without such a long waiting period because the dangers associated with accidental poisoning are clear.

I recently wrote a letter to the Editor of the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, to be published in the November issue, which speaks to my personal experience with carbon monoxide this summer. After checking in to a luxury fishing lodge in Alaska, I was alerted to abnormally high CO concentrations within the building by my own personal CO alarm. I was able to track down the source to an improperly vented gas water heater. Had I not been carrying my own alarm, there would have been no way to know of the high CO concentrations, as the gas is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. It is important to protect the public from accidents like these sooner rather than later by expediting the requirement to install CO alarms in dwellings in Washington State. It is my recommendation that the Council advance the implementation date as much as is reasonably possible.

I appreciate your work on the issue. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Neil B. Hampson, M.D.
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